Statement of Bangladesh Government regarding Bangladeshi Immigrants

1310. SHRI S. RAMCHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to Bangladesh's warning not to forcibly send people across the border in the name of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to resolve the problem by discussion keeping in view of our friendly relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) The Government is aware of the statements of the Government of Bangladesh on the return of Bangladeshi nationals staying illegally in India. The Government has conveyed its concern about the seriousness and the magnitude of the problem to the Government of Bangladesh at the political and diplomatic levels on several occasions, most recently at the Home Secretary-level talks in Dhaka on 21-23 November 1998. Government have sought the cooperation of the Government of Bangladesh on measures to strengthen security at the border to prevent illegal border crossing.

Official level talks between India and Pakistan

1311. SHRI SITARAM KESRI:
SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the official level talks between India and Pakistan have been held during the last six months; and

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held and decision taken therein, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) As part of the agreed composite dialogue, the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan met in Islamabad on 15-18 October 1998 for discussions on the subjects of Peace and Secrurity, including Confidence Building Measures, and Jammu & Kashmir. The discussions on Peace and Security and CBM's indicated that there was a convergence of views on the need for exchanging ideas on security concepts and nuclear doctrines, developing nuclear and conventional CBMs, putting in place communications links that are dedicated, secure and failsafe, increased information flow for greater transparency and predictability, as well as for setting up of a consultative mechanism for periodic review and improved implementation of existing CBMs. There was agreement in principle that experts on the two sides could meet for further discussions on these matters. In the disucssion on Jammu & Kashmir, our side drew attention to the fact that the entire state of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India and that this legal status does not admit of any change. We also reiterated the demand that Pakistan should forthwith cease its futile sponsorship of terrorism, and strictly adhere to the provisions of the Simla Agreement to which they are a party, including the commitment that neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations.

The composite dialogue process continued in New Delhi with talks being held from 5-13 November, 1998 on the subjects of Tulbul Navigation Project, Siachen, Sir Creek, Economic and Commercial Cooperation, Terrorism and Drug Trafficking and Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in various fields.

During discussions of Terrorism and

Drug Trafficking, Government gave Pakistan detailed evidence regarding its role in sponsoring terrorism against India and demanded that this should stop. Government also asked it to close down training camps for terrorists, and hand over the terrorists and fugitives from the law who have been given sanctuary in Pakistan.

In discussions on Economic and Commercial Cooperation, the two sides recognised the utility of cooperation in international fora on issues such as the environment and the social clause, and felt the need for enhanced exchange of information on economic and commercial matters. Both sides agreed to hold technical level discussions on the further facilitation of railway traffic between the two countries within the framework of the bilateral agreement on the subject. It was also decided to hold technical discussions on purchase of power from Pakistan. These discussions were subsequently held in Islamabad from 24-27 Novemebr 1998. It has been agreed to continue discussions on the power purchase issue in New Delhi on dates, to be decided mutually.

On the subject of Promotion of Friendly Exchanges, the two sides held discussions on visa liberalisation and civilian prisoners. They also agreed that expert level talks would be held to discuss the establishment of a bus service between Delhi and Labore. Talks on the bus service were held in Islamabad from 1-4 December 1998 and the two sides initialled an agreement and a protocol on 3 Decemebr 1998, providing a framework and an operational mechanism for the bus service. Follow up action will now be taken for signing of the agreement by the two Governments.

The two sides also agreed that fishermen who innocently strayed into each other's territorial waters should be released immediately on completion of necessary procedures. 190 Indian fishermen returned to India on November 23, 1998 following these talks.

It was also agreed to hold technical level discussions on the subject of civilian prisoners with the objective of evolving modalities to address this subject effectively.

On the subject of Siachen, Sir Creek and Tulbul Navigation Project, Government presented reasonable, practical and realistic proposals to Pakistan.

It has been agreed to continue discussions on all the eight subjects identified for the dialogue. In February 1999, the Foreign Secretaries will meet to review the discussions held between 15 October-13 November 1998 and also begin the next round of the composite dialogue process.

Double standard by USA in dealing with terrorism

1312. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that USA adopts double standards in dealing with the terrorist activities in Kashmir and other parts of the world;

(b) whether this US standard provided an indirect protection to the terrorist operations in Kashmir; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) The United States Government has stated on a number of occasions that it is opposed to terrorism wherever it occurs. The US President in his address to UN General Assembly on 21st Septebmer, 1998 described common obligations of international community to tackle the menace of terrorism as: 'to give terrorists no support; no sanctuary; no financial